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Dear Missionary Friends,

Please excuse the hiatus in providing information about Cuba and the Castros. While the mission work of Spirit Quest International has continued unabated, I, personally, was sidelined for a time with an unexpected by-pass surgery. All is well now, and I thank the Lord that every day has shown improvement.

Colombia

Our new headquarters in Santa Marta, Colombia, was officially opened in early April. While I was unable to attend the festivities, SQI's South America Regional Superintendent Jesus Esquivel's reports were inspiring. Many other Colombian pastors attended the opening, and we are anticipating increasing fellowship in that area. Colombia presents a fertile field for a move of GOD's work.

Honduras

Spirit Quest International has opened five new churches in and around the city of Nocoame in the southern portion of Honduras. SQI's Central America Regional Superintendent, Jesus Teran, has completed and filed the legal paperwork for SQI under the name of En Busca del Espiritu del Honduras. SQI is setting the administrative framework for a strong move for Christ in that country.

Mexico

In Mexico, a part of SQI's Central America Region, we have almost doubled the number of congregations over the past two years. Under Regional Superintendent Teran, the work continues to flourish as the Chihuahua conference has shown remarkable growth. This year our annual conference will be held in Acuna in October, and has drawn interest throughout the area.

Cuba

SQI's Regional Caribbean/Cuba Superintendent, Enrique Mosqueda, visited Cuba earlier this year to secure a base for our Cuban headquarters, and ordained Alien Rojas Canizares. The outside wall of the property is under construction, and Brother Alien continues to evangelize the area. Thus, both physical and spiritual growth is underway in Cuba.

India

Our newest group to unite with SQI is located in Chennai, India, formerly known as Madras. Pastor Ramesh is director over five churches, as well as a feeding station for the poor. In future mailings, we will provide pictures of this energetic and exciting work for the Lord.

Peru

Regional Superintendent Teran has just returned from his second of three planned teaching assignments on the Amazon River. Over fifty ministers made their way to the two weeks of Bible Study, coming by boat as there are no roads on which to travel. In the future, we will include photos of the classes held in building constructed on stilts because of the fluctuation of the river level. We will also include a picture of a six foot long catfish that the preachers caught to feed the group.

Thank You

Thank you to all of our partners that have made it possible to continue, and expand our work for the Lord. As we have indicated previously, every dollar earmarked for a specific area goes in its entirety to that location. There are no administrative or transfer costs withheld from your gift. SQI pays all money transfer from the general fund, which in the case of Cuba, is 10%.

Again, thank you for your faithfulness. Together, we can accomplish much for the Lord.

Sincerely,



**Bradley O. Brauser, President & Founder
Spirit Quest International**

Succession in Cuba

Changes are in the offing in Cuba. Not since 1959, when Fulgencio Batista was overthrown by Fidel Castro, has Cuba has been ruled by anyone not named Castro. But now, the Castro brothers are being overtaken by Father Time.

Fidel, at age 89 years, is suffering from a number of maladies that have required extensive surgeries and is rarely seen in public. But health is not everything in running the Cuban government as the Castro brothers do not appear to agree on all things.

As an example, during the recent Obama / Raul meetings, Fidel let it be known that he was not all that pleased with an American president coming to Havana.

President Obama stated that it was,



Cuban President Raul Castro greets U.S. President Obama.

"time for both nations to put the past behind them and face the future as friends and neighbors." Fidel responded, in a column reminding Cubans of the many U.S. efforts to overthrow the Communist government.

While officially retired, there is no doubt Fidel's presence is still felt as evidenced by the "fall from grace" of several young leaders who were once thought to be his successors.

On the other hand, Raul, age 83 years, seems to be in excellent health. Upon assuming control of the government in 2006, Raul began to make subtle reforms that ever-so slightly changed the face of Cuban Socialism.

Since that time, Raul has introduced, on a limited basis, the private ownership of farms, the development of small businesses, and the right to buy and sell houses and cars.

Tourists, fueled by visitors from Europe, have been the driving force behind the small businesses. But, to further understand the growth of small businesses, one needs to understand the currency of Cuba.

There are two currencies in use in Cuba. One is for tourists, and it is the Cuban Convertible Peso, or CUC. It is pegged to the U.S. dollar - equal in value. The second currency is that in which government workers are paid and is known as Moneda Nacional. It carries a value of one twenty-fifth of a U.S. dollar.

Understandably, this disparity in a dual currency system has caused many professionals to leave their jobs and enter the tourist business - at any level that will get them closer to the CUC, tourists, and a better life.



Cuban Convertible Peso - CUC's

This explains why the recent coming of a cruise ship to Havana was greeted by such an outpouring of excitement and joy!

Changes Forthcoming?

This does not mean that Cuba will move to a different political system. It simply must be viewed as a way for communism/socialism to co-exist in a capitalistic world.

As evidence of this change, Spirit Quest International now has ownership of property in Havana upon which is presently being built our Cuban headquarters. Located three blocks from the Plaza de Revoluccion, and eight blocks from the waterfront, such action would have been unheard of a short time ago. To GOD be the Glory.

Towards the Future

Raul has announced that he will retire in 2018 at the close of his second five year term as president. He has appointed as his successor, and first vice-president, a former electrical engineer and university professor - 52 yr. old Miguel Diaz-Canel.



Raul (left) and Miguel Diaz-Canel

Diaz-Canel served in the military under Raul as the manager of the military's commercial operations, and won high praise for his ideological firmness of the Cuban brand of socialism.

Perhaps, Diaz-Canel will develop a socialism/communism hybrid with a state controlled capitalist economy.



The Castro Brothers - Fidel and Raul

Of interest, installing Diaz-Canel will set aside one legal barrier that separates our two countries. The Helms-Burton Act of 1996 declares that the U.S. will only recognize the legitimacy of this Cuban government when someone other than a Castro is in power.

Apparently, a new face will happen in 2018. We'll wait and see.